



Envision Arlington Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2019

7:30 PM

Senior Center, lower level conference room

Present: Juli Brazile, Annie LaCourt, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Jen Toole, Kelly Lynema, Greg Christiana

Absent: Scott Lever, Cindy Starks, Sue Doctrow

1. Introductions and Announcements

Annie is required to step down from Envision Arlington Standing Committee because she's joining Fin Comm. So this is her last meeting with us.

2. Approve December minutes

Approved unanimously with minor corrections.

3. Planning for 2019

First Question: what would you like (us) to work on this year?

Juli: would like to be sure we get final survey reports done for the past couple of years to provide some interpretation and analysis of the raw results. Simplest model is to write 1-2 page memos to insert in the existing summary reports.

Jen: would like to write-up our plan for our values projects.

Kelly: would like to increase response rates (on the survey). Got 11% last year, would like to get 20%. Based on demographics of responses we can figure out which communities we should work harder to reach.

Greg: Would like to try some more experimental projects that have relatively low chance of success but potentially high impact.

Annie: Would like to pin down how we're going to execute on our goals. Would like to see progress on the Governance goal in particular.

Juli drew the following categories on the whiteboard:

Survey	Values	Governance
outreach / articles	community & citizen service diversity governance /communication / fiscal resources	house parties survey results
actual "kiosk" events	education	precinct meetings
reports	environment	EA structure -> lower barriers
	need to break up "culture and recreation"	events / new risks
	business / economic development	

The bold words are the broad topics: Survey Project, Updating the Values Project, Our specific work this year on Governance (as part of the larger Values Project) and possibly updating Envision Arlington's structure.

Juli suggested that we might rename task groups to committees, and working groups could pull people from multiple committees as well as people outside of these communities to work on a project together. This reduces barriers to entry for people who have a project or short-term goal.

We used diversity as a recurring example of the intersection of the demographic, cultural, ideological silos within town. Annie suggested pop-up events around individuals presenting their culture, e.g. food or other cultural aspects, as a way to start creating cross-talk that starts to break down the silos.

Kelly suggested ways to promote the survey, e.g. boosting a post about it on Facebook. She talked to the person who does this in Cambridge and boosting surveys on Facebook has doubled their response rate.

Annie will look into promoting the survey at a Select Board meeting, either announced by a Select Board member or someone from the public. Juli suggests that we might be able to have ACMi ready to add a banner with the survey address during the announcement.

Elisabeth suggested that communities which are related to particular subject matter of the survey are promoting the survey within their community. Kelly said she would follow-up about that.

Juli: if someone came in to demonstrate the kiosk for the survey, we could have it covered in an article (Advocate and/or Your Arlington).

Annie: We could have a training/presentation at Thompson or Hardy for doing the survey on iPads in order to serve the lower income communities in East Arlington.

Juli: biggest meta-problem is: How do we decide about what the new buckets should be?

Annie: At the pilot house party, participants voiced similar thoughts about their interactions and expectations of town government:

- people really value when their government is responsive, really wowed when government responds quickly
- people care a lot about being respected by their town government
- in the positive interactions, it felt that the town official/employee was kind, effective, factual, knowledgeable
- surprised by how coupled people's frustrations were tied to poor communication or breakdown in communication from the town, or lack of clarity around getting important, timely information
- parking issues came up a lot, even among a relatively savvy group in terms of town governance, but folks rarely contacted any town officials about the issue

Annie's takeaway: governance and communication may go together in our bucketing.

Annie: we're already being multi-modal with governance, e.g. with the survey and dot exercises, but we should do more house parties.

Juli: House party requires an accurate notetaker...

Annie: ...and moderator who's not engaging with the discussion so much as facilitating it.

Annie: We need more structure, i.e. we lack deadlines.

4. New business

a) Precinct Meetings

Annie: re: precinct meetings... we should send some strategic meetings to individuals who can pull these together.

Juli: We know 8 & 10 will do their precinct meeting.

Greg: What are the biggest blockers to prevent precinct meetings from happening?

Juli: Finding a venue and managing the logistics...

Annie: Precincts 8 & 10 held precinct meetings for 3 years in a row and now it's a regular thing. E.g. 13 & 15 (and maybe 17 but it might be tough for folks from 17 to get up the hill to Stratton) could hold a precinct meeting at Stratton.

Juli: Schools cost about \$200 to hold a meeting.

Annie: Could use Lyons meeting room at Town Hall.

Greg: We should put together a spreadsheet for potential venues and Town Meeting members who might be interested in organizing their precinct meeting.

Greg will draft an email to Town Meeting members about precinct meetings, how EA can help, etc.

b) Juli called for vote to approve Water Bodies Fund article. Approved unanimously.

Submitted by Greg Christiana